



Employees are Passing the Daily Test of Working at an Exceptional Level



Director Jeff Morales

The characters of both individuals and institutions are tested most severely when they are under the greatest pressure and stress. And clearly, the California Department of Transportation is faced with an enormous challenge.

The State Legislature has passed a budget, although a number of uncertainties remain about its effect on transportation. But one thing is sure. In recent weeks, each of you has been asked to rise above the ordinary and meet demands that would have seemed unimaginable only a few months ago. And you responded.

The men and women who make up this department have shown that they are made of tough fiber. Employees are passing the daily test of working at an exceptional level even in the midst of an uncertain situation. And I thank you for that.

Despite the challenges, many of you worked overtime recently to help us come up with solutions to a pending termination of construction contracts. You worked with contractors and local agen-

cies to put together a plan that kept projects alive. And the effort paid off.

As a result of your labors, many contractors stayed on the job -- at least temporarily financing projects out of their own pockets. And a number of local agencies agreed to lend the state money long enough to keep contracts moving ahead on projects that they at least partly fund.

Our goal was to keep a catastrophe from happening -- until a budget could be passed. And the Department owes a great deal to private companies and local governments, who collectively bailed us out with loans to keep some work moving forward.

Now, with a budget passed, the work of the Department goes on.

Passage of the budget will have a positive effect on the State Highway Account's (SHA) cash balance -- even if it does not completely solve the shortfall we will face in future months.

As a result, we will continue to work with our congressional representatives to ensure the timely passage of a federal budget that will provide California's fair share of transportation funds. And we will point toward the possibility of a General Fund loan to help us address our cash shortfall and eliminate the need to use local obligation authority. Meanwhile, we will need to use some Local Assistance obligation authority to generate cash over the next several months.

That's where things stand at the moment. So, with the budget's passage, we can also look forward to moving ahead in solving the state's transportation needs. Even against the backdrop of these fiscal challenges -- and operating with fewer resources -- we have faced in the last few months, we have made real

progress. And those advances lead us to believe that other important projects will be forthcoming.

The Toll Bridge Program continued to move forward, unaffected by the budget situation -- due to AB 1171, passed in 2001, which provides funds for the toll bridge retrofit program.

And, in recent weeks, we joined with our regional transportation partners to meet important milestones.

In Los Angeles, the Metro Gold Line opened 13.7 miles of new light rail service to connect the business and cultural centers of Los Angeles and Pasadena.

In late June, the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) opened its extension to the San Francisco International Airport, which is expected to remove as many as 10,000 vehicles from congested highways leading to the airport.

And in this issue of the CT News, you can read about a long-awaited extension of Highway 56 in San Diego, which will fill a major gap -- and improve the flow of traffic -- in that city's transportation system.

Without belaboring the issue, I think the point is clear. We find ourselves in challenging times. Yet, it is during such times that we can test ourselves, and present ourselves with the opportunity to find the best within us.

Over the last four years, I have found the men and women of Caltrans to be among the best, brightest and most committed professionals I have ever known. And I have no doubt that I will see continued and daily evidence of that fact as we move together through these difficult days.

State's Oldest Freeway Takes Breather from Daily Traffic Grind

After more than 60 years of continuous service to the motoring public, California's longest serving freeway was given time off for good behavior.

For four hours on June 15, the roar of engines on the Pasadena Freeway (also known as the Arroyo Seco Parkway) was replaced by the sounds of 5,000 participants in the Arroyo-Fest Freeway Walk and Bike Ride.

"It definitely was something out of the ordinary," said Hector Obeso, Caltrans District 7 Chief Permit Engineer in Los Angeles.

Over the years Caltrans has closed specific segments of the system such as the upper deck of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge for a benefit run and walk. Both the I-105 Century Freeway and the extension of Interstate 210 in eastern Los Angeles County were the sites of large community events prior to their opening.

From 6 a.m. until 10 a.m. on June 15, the Pasadena Freeway was off-limits to autos as more than 3,000 walkers and 2,000 cyclists meandered along the six miles of roadway stretching from



District 7 Permit Inspectors Al Salinas, above, and Tyrone Taylor, Sr., oversaw the ride.



I-5 to Glenarm Street in Pasadena.

"This was one of the most challenging special events we have approved," said Obeso, who has been in the District 7 Permits Office for five years. "We worked with the organizers of the event for more than three years to ensure its success. Other requests we have received have had short time frames that made them difficult. Here we had the time and a positive working

relationship with the organizers and the surrounding communities to do it right."

On June 15, as the first light of dawn peeked over the San Gabriel Mountains, a private traffic control company working under the direction of Caltrans District 7 and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) closed 18 ramps and three freeway connectors.

While closing of the freeway proceeded without a problem, event organizers ran into some difficulties later in the morning

Pasadena Freeway

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Work Underway on Missing Link in San Diego Highway System

Even in the face of the state's budget challenges, Caltrans continues to move ahead.

For example, construction has nearly reached the half-way mark on the long-awaited extension of Highway 56 that will fill a major gap in San Diego's transportation system.

Thanks to a combination of local and state resources, including \$25 million from Governor Gray Davis' \$5.3 billion Traffic Congestion Relief Program



will be the only direct freeway connection between Interstates 5 and 15 for 25 miles.

"Highway 56 will provide a vital east-west connection between the coastal

(TCRP), the dream of a new direct connection between Interstate 15 and Interstate 5 will soon be a reality.

Highway 56, when opened in the summer of 2004,

communities nestled along Interstate 5 and the rapidly growing Interstate 15 corridor," said District 11 Director Pedro Orso-Delgado.

The new roadway will dramatically shorten the trip for motorists traveling between La Jolla, Del Mar, Encinitas, Escondido and the surrounding area. Currently, travelers making that trip must drive south to San Diego and take Highway 52 or north to Oceanside and Highway 78.

Highway 56

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Public Affairs Office
1120 N Street, Room 1200
Mail Stop 49
Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 654-4020
(916) 653-4086 (TTY) or CRS - 711



Competition Sparks Creativity, Keeps Ideas Flowing in Central Region

District 6 Director Mike Leonardo has a personal mission. He wants every employee in the Central Region to be aware of Caltrans' mission and goals.

To make it happen, Leonardo decided to have a contest for employees to design a business card showing the department's mission and goals. The only restrictions were that it had to fit on a business card, front and back, and it had to contain the Caltrans mission and goals. Otherwise, employees were given free rein.

"I wanted to have something small enough to fit in the ID badge holder that could help employees learn and remember what our mission and goals were and I wanted it to be a first class product that employees would be willing to carry around," Leonardo said.

The winning entry was submitted by Jeff Fowler, a graphic artist in the planning department in Fresno. For his winning suggestion, Fowler received a T-shirt with his design printed on the back.

"Jeff's design met all of the criteria. It conveyed the mission and goals message in an eye-catching way. And it did it without being busy or overwhelming," Leonardo said.

The design contest was administered by District 6's Director Advisory Team, better known as the I³ Team which stands for Innovation-Interaction-Implementation. This team was created to implement ideas from staff and management on ways to save time and money and improve communications, while improving project delivery throughout the district.

The team includes representatives from almost every functional unit in District 6.

The team reports directly to Leonardo, who makes the final decision on which plans to carry out. This circumvents the usual chain of command and makes it possible to act quickly.



District 6's I³ Team are, from left: Robert James, Lanawati Hadisudarmo, Juergen Vespermann, Stephen Tracey, Dale Mell, Sarah Gassner, Robert Johnson, Rafaela Leal, John Beck, Humberto Almaguer.

"The goal of the I³ team is to identify, prioritize and execute new ways to foster better communications and improve project delivery. And these folks take their role very seriously," said Leonardo. "They are very talented and committed to improving the way we do business in District 6 and the Central Region."

Team leader Juergen Vespermann, an environmental planner in District 6, said employee feedback is essential.

"We are trying to get employees involved in the

project delivery process," he explained. "Very often staff have ideas on how to make improvements to the system, the way we do things, processes and so forth—but these suggestions might get stuck somewhere or people get too busy to pursue these ideas. The team provides staff a positive and productive medium to voice their ideas—and we'll do our best to make sure those ideas are acknowledged, hopefully through implementation."

The team encourages ideas that affect project delivery, directly or indirectly. "This can be something that boosts the morale of employees or saves the department money," Vespermann said. "The staff person suggesting any innovation will be involved in the process and will stay informed throughout the process."

Some examples of projects the team is working on include: a rotation program for environmental planners into Construction, Right-of-way and Planning; an online training program for the whole district; and a program to reduce response time for staking properties. The complete list of projects/ideas and links to the management plans can be visited on the team's Web page at:

<http://sv06web/i3team/index.htm>.

Similar teams are operating throughout the Central Region in Stockton (District 10), Bishop (District 9) and San Luis Obispo (District 5).

Caltrans Employees Join Fight Against Heart Disease

Caltrans workers in the Sacramento area will be participating in the 3rd annual State Employee Heart Walk on Sept. 4. from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the State Capitol.

The walk, a non-competitive, one mile event, is expected to draw more than 2,000 participants. The event will include music, refreshments, health screenings, walker incentive prizes, "thank you" lunch coupons for walkers raising \$25-plus; and information on heart-healthy products and services.

Larry Vanderhoef, Chancellor of UC Davis, is honorary chair of the event.

Caltrans is among those state agencies promoting employee health and wellness by organizing department walking teams. Department teams are the backbone to the fundraising success of the State Employees Heart Walk. Last year, Caltrans ranked first

for the second consecutive year among all other participating state agencies, receiving the Top Team Achievement Award.

The American Heart Walk, an American Heart Association national event, will bring together more than 750,000 walkers this year in more than 600 locations. In its 11-year history, the American Heart Walk has raised more than \$326 million. Funds raised go directly to heart and stroke research and education programs. Research funded by the American Heart Association has yielded important discoveries such as CPR, life-extending drugs, pacemakers, bypass surgery and surgical techniques to repair heart defects.

For information, regarding the State Employee Heart Walk in Sacramento, contact Sally Skidgel at 227-2648 or check out the following web site:

<http://www.heartwalk.kintera.org/sacramento>

Operators See Smart Card in State's Transit Future

By Joyce Parks
Division of Mass Transportation

Caltrans' Division of Mass Transportation (DMT), at the California Transit Association's spring conference in Sacramento, hosted the first statewide meeting of transit operators and transportation officials for the purpose of discussing smart card (universal electronic fare collection) implementation in California.

Recognizing a growing interest in smart card technologies among transit operators throughout the state and potential legislation in the horizon, the conference provided an opportunity for a face-to-face dialogue with our partners on the opportunities and challenges associated with smart card interoperability.

Preliminary findings from a DMT survey of all public transit operators in the state indicated widespread interest in statewide interoperability but many felt constrained by financial and institutional barriers.



Left, Gary Gallegos, Executive Director of the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), joins a panel assembled to discuss the "smart card."



To address these issues, a panel of representatives from four agencies that have implemented smart cards, shared their experiences in establishing their systems and answered questions from the audience. They included: Russell Driver, TransLink Project Manager at the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, Gary Gallegos, Executive Director at San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Ginger Gherardi, Executive Director at Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC), and Jane Matsumoto at Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA).

Each panel member was asked to focus on project cost, funding sources, technologies purchased, and number of agencies participating in their systems. Other areas covered during the session were: barriers and solutions, benefits and costs, performance measures, lessons learned, system security, and suggestions for start-up systems.

Smart Card

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Transportation Research Holds Key for Improved Mobility

By Debra Hoffman

Caltrans, in an ongoing effort to make sure that national research leads to improved mobility on the state and local level, is working with the Transportation Research Board (TRB) to ensure that California's issues are addressed at the national level.

TRB, founded in 1920, is an operating arm of the National Research Council. Its mission is to promote innovation and progress in transportation by stimulating and conducting research, facilitating the dissemination of information, and encouraging the implementation of research results. Some of the services TRB provides are mechanisms for information exchange and dissemination, inclusive forums for policy debate and discussion, and independence and credibility for conducting special studies and administering special research programs.

The Transportation Research Board is the "go to" organization for any transportation topic. The board maintains 200 standing technical committees and task forces. More than 3,000 of the nation's top transportation administrators, engineers, social scientists, researchers, academicians, and other professionals comprise the membership to the committees. The TRB annual meeting each January in Washington, D.C., attracts 8,000 transportation professionals to participate in more than 550 sessions and 2,000 presentations.

Each state's representative keeps the TRB advised of activities of that state's Department of Transportation. At Caltrans, that is the function of the Division of Research and Innovation, Office of National Liaison, which is managed by Wes Lum.

Department employees can participate by using the many resources available or by serving on one of the many panels or committees.

The Office of National Liaison is the focal point for all TRB activities and is considered the national research contact for Caltrans. This office is also responsible for providing primary staff support for the department's representatives on the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Organization (AASHTO) Standing Committee on Research (SCOR), Randy Iwasaki and Wes Lum. It also staffs the Research Advisory Committee (RAC), National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) and Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP).

Publications: TRB relies heavily on its publications to share research results and extend its outreach. Publications are disseminated worldwide and include the following series of reports:

- *Transportation Research Records*
- *Special Reports*
- *TR News - bimonthly magazine*
- *Conference Proceedings*
- *Transportation Research Circulars*
- *NCHRP and TCRP Reports, Syntheses of Practices, Research Results Digests, and Legal Research Digests*

Transportation Research

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Who Knew Coffee and Snacks Could Pay for College?

By Susana Zavala
District 5 Public Information
Officer

A special scholarship program funded entirely from the proceeds of coffee and snack sales in the District 5 cafeteria has raised more than \$3,500 for college-bound high school seniors who live within the district's five counties and plan to pursue a career in transportation.

The genesis of the program, which began in February 2002, came after the district lost the cafeteria staffing due to lack of business.

Judy Yager, Staff Services Manager overseeing Public Affairs, developed the idea of having snacks and coffee brought in from an outside vendor and reselling the treats to the staff at slightly more than actual cost to raise money for the program. Such programs have the encouragement and support of the California Transportation Foundation.

District 5 has had other scholarship programs in the past, but none as successful and as widely supported as the current one.



District 5's own "kaffee klatsch: From left, Vince Zorn (Facilities), Julia Bolger (Budgets), Denise Turner (Reception), and Richard Gonzales (Reprographics). They helped to brew up the idea for a caffeine-based transportation scholarship fund.

Four of District 5's employees keep the coffee and snack sales operating smoothly: Denise Turner, Vince Zorn, Julia Bolger and Richard Gonzales. They play a key role in the effectiveness of the scholarship program and are very committed to the cause. A local small business, Hava Java, is happy to provide the high-quality coffee and snacks for District 5's hard-working staff.

The scholarship program continues to flourish. When the program began last year, \$500 was raised and one scholarship was awarded. This year, the \$3,000 raised and will pay for six schol-

arships, in the amount of \$500 each, to be awarded this summer to deserving high school seniors.

"I'm impressed at our employees' creative solution and commitment to this worthy cause," said an appreciative Gregg Albright, District 5 District Director.

As for the employees, they enjoy the double benefit. Not only are they proud their money is going to help kids attend college, but they get to enjoy the goodies sold as well.

Smart Card

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Discussion highlights included:

- A consensus that while cost is the major factor, if a region has the will to implement a smart card system, a leap of faith is required. Costs vary greatly depending on system size, system capabilities, approach to testing and implementation.
- The number of agencies participating within a region appears not to be a factor. Good relations with regional partners is key = good communication, trust, credibility, and a shared vision.
- While having a single clearinghouse in a region would make it easier to achieve interoperability, the clearinghouse function is often the toughest barrier to overcome since operators are reluctant to relinquish system autonomy and day-to-day management of their systems.
- Breech of security regarding personal information has not been found to be an issue on any of the systems.
- In the short-term, costs are likely to increase as the existing system is phased out and the new system is implemented.
- Areas for savings include: reduction in equipment maintenance expenses, expenses associated with paper passes through economies of scale, cash collection and processing costs, fraud management.
- Anticipated benefits of interoperability are clear: interregional connectivity, faster boarding, ease in making modal shifts, customer convenience, long-term increased ridership, are but some of the examples.
- CMAQ provided the bulk of funding. However, a creative mix of other federal, state, and local sources to leverage funds were used.
- Interoperability is widely viewed as desirable and inevitable in California. Illinois, Delaware, Washington, D.C., and Florida, already have systems in place. Cost, particularly in a weak economy, remains the overriding consideration.

"We were very pleased with the turnout of over 50 transit professionals to the workshop. We had an excellent panel and we had a timely three-hour discussion on a seminal technology for making transit a more practical travel option," said Jay Norvell, Acting DMT Chief.

New Program Aims to Reduce Accidents in Farmworker Vehicles

A new program has been created to educate agricultural workers in the San Joaquin Valley about the dangers of driving without seat belts or while "under the influence."

The bilingual Farmworkers Transportation Safety Program will target an estimated 400,000 agricultural growers, labor contractors and farmworkers in Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare counties through television, newspapers and other means. The San Joaquin Valley is home to as much as 55 percent of the state's agricultural workers, who suffer an inordinate number of vehicular and fatality accidents as they commute to work from county to county.

Maria Contreras-Sweet, Secretary for the State Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, officially launched the program in a June ceremony in Fresno. She said that the Spanish and English language outreach will feature 40 traffic safety workshops and 20 presentation in the four-county area. The goal is to increase seat belt and DUI compliance while reducing vehicle accidents among farm workers.

Safety outreach workers will be assigned to each of the four counties and will present a curriculum in consultation with growers, farm labor contractors, farmworkers and traffic safety experts.

The Office of Traffic Safety funded the outreach through a \$1 million grant to the California Department of Transportation, which provided program oversight.

In August 1999, 13 farmworkers died in a collision near Five Points in Fresno County. Accident statistics indicate that agricultural workers suffer inordinate numbers of deaths and injuries resulting from vehicle crashes due to weather conditions and/or irresponsible drivers. For example, an estimated 75 to 80 percent of agricultural workers living in Kings County commute to work in Fresno, Kern or Tulare counties throughout the year.

The Business, Transportation and Housing Agency took the initiative for securing federal funding for this traffic safety project.

Caltrans has contracted with Proteus, Inc., to implement the project. Proteus is a Visalia-based organization that offers more than 50 programs through a network of three-dozen branch offices, many in rural towns. Proteus helps participants learn English, earn a high school diploma and find year-round employment.

Proteus will train a number of safety educators or outreach workers assigned to each of the four counties to present an educational curriculum in consultation with growers, farm labor contractors, farm workers and traffic safety experts.

More than 250 different commodities are produced in the San Joaquin Valley where more than half of the state's farmworkers are employed. Estimates put the number of agricultural employees in Fresno, Kings, Kern and Tulare counties at between 340,000 and 900,000.

The 2000 Census found that approximately 90 percent of workers older than age 16 in all industries in Fresno, Kings and Kern counties commute to work by car, van or truck. The percentage is likely even higher for farmworkers, who labor in

rural areas where public transit is often absent. Farmworkers often drive older and poorly maintained vehicles. Plus, many are immigrants, unfamiliar with California motor vehicle laws and regulations.

Within the Division of Mass Transportation, there is an on-going pilot project that complements the Farmworker Transportation Safety Project. This pilot project is the Agriculture Industry Transportation Services (AITS) that is being conducted in Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare counties. The AITS pilot project is a multi-year \$8 million

effort focusing on providing safe, affordable and reliable transportation services to farmworkers and their families. Funding is derived from a total of \$4 million awarded to Caltrans by the federal Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) program, matched by \$4 million from the State Public Transportation Account. Rep. Cal Dooley secured the bulk of the federal JARC dollars with a \$3 million earmark in Federal Fiscal Year 2001.

The AITS pilot project is operated by the Kings County Area Public Transit Agency (KCAPTA) and Kern Regional Transit (KRT). KCAPTA is procuring 134 15-passenger vans and implementing vanpools for agricultural workers in Kings, Fresno and Tulare counties. KRT is using its existing fleet to provide expanded and/or new on demand dial-a-ride and inter-city bus service for the cities of Edison, Lamont, Weedpatch and Arvin with service to Bakersfield. Additionally, with the purchase of four new buses, KRT is implementing North County Express service from Bakersfield to Shafter, McFarland, Wasco and Delano.



BT&H Secretary Maria Contreras-Sweet, above, along with members of the Fresno Proteus office in the background. To the right is Jesus Gamboa, Proteus CEO.

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that pushed back reopening of the highway to 10:30 a.m. and kept one of the connectors closed until noon.

"We were fortunate that traffic was not affected too much by the later reopening but the potential for significant delays was there. That will certainly be an issue that we and the California Highway Patrol will examine very closely if a permit is requested in the future," said District 7 Permit Inspector Tyrone Taylor.

Taylor, who was on site during the entire four hours of ArroyoFest, said everything worked according to plan except for the late opening.

"All in all, it came off well. Even with the late reopening, we did not experience any major traffic delays," said Taylor.

While his attention during ArroyoFest was focused on making sure that traffic continued to flow, Taylor, a longtime resident of Los Angeles, couldn't help taking a moment to grasp the significance of the Pasadena Freeway without traffic.

"It was eerie seeing the freeway closed with just walkers, joggers and cyclists," said Taylor.

The event's organizers, the ArroyoFest Working Committee and Occidental College, used the freeway as a stage to engage people in the environmental, transportation and community development issues facing the area and to showcase various forms of transportation.

When the organizers first approached the department with the idea of closing the freeway, the initial response was one of deep skepticism, according to Obeso.

"It's sounds like a great idea but the devil is in the details. Our biggest obstacles were what do you do with the traffic and to make sure that the participants in the event are safe," he said.

Originally the organizers wanted to close the freeway from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m.

"We looked at it and determined that

we could not accommodate the request because of the projected impacts to the traveling public," said Sam Esquanazi, program manager for District 7's Traffic Management Team. "The Traffic Management Team's job during special events is to provide the public with real

efficient staff available to make sure the reopening does not go past the deadline."

In processing the permit request, District 7 focused on four areas: ensuring the safety of the event participants and the traveling public, reducing the inconvenience to motorists, securing the support of the surrounding communities and making sure that there would be no damage to the freeway.

The event organizers and District 7 put together a traffic management plan (TMP) with the surrounding communities of Los Angeles, South Pasadena and Pasadena and the CHP to utilize city streets while the freeway was closed.

On the day of the event, Caltrans District 7 had four members of its traffic management team and two inspectors from the Permits Office on hand to make sure things ran smoothly.

Obeso credited Michael Sariah, Doug Richter of the Permits Office, Fred Sabin Jr. of the traffic management team, Diane Kane from Environmental Planning and Jeanne Bonfilio from the Public Information Office. Along with Taylor and Esquenazi they worked tirelessly

through all the issues to make sure that the ArroyoFest was a success.

Taylor, Obeso and Esquanazi said that lessons learned from this year's event would be valuable if organizers want to make it an annual occurrence.

"We noticed some improvements that could be made and if a request is made for next year, we will be able to put in place those changes to make sure the event goes on without a problem and that the freeway reopens on time," said Taylor.

The Arroyo Seco Parkway opened in December 1940. Renamed the Pasadena Freeway in 1954, the facility carries an average of more than 130,000 vehicles a day.



Community bicyclists participate in a rare event -- with bikes temporarily replacing cars on the Pasadena Freeway.

time information, and keep traffic moving efficiently with as little delay as possible.

"Our challenge was to determine if it could work and how. Together with the event organizers, the surrounding communities and the CHP we were able to agree on a plan to close the freeway from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m.," Esquanazi said.

He added that the decision to insist on the 10 a.m. deadline was critical. "Sunday morning is our lightest traffic time. We determined that reopening the freeway at 10 a.m. would not severely impact traffic. When the reopening was delayed, the potential for traffic delays increased but we were fortunate that they did not occur," he said. "Next time, we will make sure the organizers have suf-

Highway 56*continued from page 2*

The \$183 million Highway 56 project consists of building nearly five miles of new four-lane freeway between I-5 and I-15 from Carmel Valley to Rancho Penasquitos in San Diego. An interchange would be built at Black Mountain Road along with a bike path to run adjacent to the freeway. Ultimately, the project would be expanded to six lanes with a median allowing for either mixed-flow, carpool lanes or transit uses. A second interchange at Camino Santa Fe and a third interchange at Camino del Sur also would be built.

"Highway 56 is important to meeting both regional and local transportation needs," said Joe Hull, District 11 Deputy District Director for Traffic Operations and former Highway 56 Project Manager.

The nearly five mile segment is the final piece in the phased improvement of the highway.

The 1988 San Diego General Plan called for construction of the highway to connect Interstates 5 and 15. The City of San Diego and Caltrans began work on the environmental document for the project in 1994. The document was certified in mid-1998 shortly before San Diego voters approved two ballot measures modifying the general plan supporting large-scale residential development along the Highway 56 corridor.

"Completion of this route is a high priority for the City of San Diego as it works to meet the area's need for housing. The challenge for all the parties involved was to make sure that the development would be built in a time frame that did not overwhelm the transportation system," said Hull.

A total of 17 developers had projects calling for more than 10,000 housing units proposed along the corridor. Working with the city and the department, seven of the housing projects were permitted to proceed.

Highway 56 was scheduled in four phases. The first two, involving connections on the east end to Interstate 15 and the west end along Interstate 5 and funded through the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Transnet Program, were built and opened to traffic. The third component, a mile and a half section between Black Mountain Road and Camino del Sur, was opened to traffic last April. In all, Highway 56 will cover 10 miles.

Hull said Highway 56 has been a project manager's dream.

"This project has everything. Part of the route is in the coastal zone. We have coastal and upland vegetation and two major wildlife corridors. There is not much flat land and we were limited by where you could put the alignment," he said.

Instead of the original straight line envisioned by designers, the final route chosen bends like a horseshoe to the north to avoid sensitive environmental terrain.

Because so much of the terrain is hilly and dotted with canyons, department designers faced the prospect of moving 1.5 million cubic meters of material during construction.

District 11 designers plan to use the cut and fill on site, significantly reducing the need for trucks to haul the material to a disposal site.

In order to maintain the open feeling for travelers, the city insisted that a 100-foot setback be established for development along the freeway.

Also, Caltrans District 11, the city and the developers have worked cooperatively to install infrastructure such as sewer and water lines, and drainage facilities that will be needed to serve future development. A site for a new high school was chosen, allowing construction to proceed on the desperately needed new classrooms while work continues on the freeway.

"We know these infrastructure improvements will be needed in the future.

By putting them in now, we eliminate the need to do it later and possibly interrupt traffic on the freeway," Hull explained.

In 2000, the Governor proposed spending money from the congestion relief program from Highway 56, providing the final resources needed to get the project moving forward. Highway 56 was one of 141 projects funded by the TCRP, the single largest appropriation for transportation in the state's history.

The TCRP augmented \$103.3 million from the State Transportation Improvement Program, \$37.9 million in local funds, \$13.1 million from SANDAG's Transnet Program and \$4.5 million from the State and Local Transportation Partnership Program.



Transportation Research*continued from page 4*

Internet Access: Information on TRB's organization, committee activities, and upcoming conferences and meetings, as well as selected full-text reports, can be found at TRB's website (<http://www.trb.org>). Users can search the current publications catalog and order reports on line, apply to become a TRB affiliate, and sign up to receive TRB's electronic newsletter. Links to other transportation-related Internet sites are also provided.

Transportation Research Information Services (TRIS) maintains and operates an on-line computerized information file that contains both abstracts of completed research and profiles of research in progress. This database contains more than 450,000 records on various modes and aspects of transportation, including planning, management, design, finance, economics, construction, maintenance, equipment, traffic operations, and safety. TRIS is available on line and can be accessed through TRB's website.

Committees, Panels or Assistance: At various times throughout the year, the Office of National Liaison sends out requests to management asking for panel and committee member nominations. The most important reason to be on a panel is to focus on California's issues and solutions. The most recent request was in April for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP). Panel members have the opportunity to team with other transportation experts in government, private, and public entities on advancing transportation knowledge. Our panel members find their participation to be intellectually stimulating and professionally rewarding. The panels provide an opportunity for professional networking across state lines that helps all of us to do a better job.

TRB also has an Executive Committee, which determines the policies and activities of TRB, in unison with the overall policies of the National Research Council. The Executive Committee is composed of about 25 individuals from government, industry, and academia who are active in transportation. Director Jeff Morales is an Executive Committee member.

For more information about the TRB, its publications and ongoing research, contact the Office of National Liaison at (916) 654-8892, calnet 464-8892, or e-mail Wes_Lum@dot.ca.gov for assistance. Information on the Office of National Liaison staff members can be retrieved at (http://onramp.dot.ca.gov/newtech/office/national_liaison.htm). You may also go to the TRB website (<http://www.trb.org>).

Exams Schedule

The Caltrans Examination Office anticipates that the following examination bulletins will have a Final Filing date in August/September:

Assistant Information Systems Analyst (Promo)
Associate Information Systems Analyst (Specialist) (Promo)
Executive Secretary I (Promo)
Personnel Services Specialist I (Promo)
Printing Trades Supervisor I (Promo)
Research Analyst II (GIS) (Promo)
Secretary (Promo)
Senior Equipment Engineer (Promo)
Senior Management Auditor (Promo)
Staff Management Auditor (Promo)
Staff Management Auditor (SPEC) SCO (Promo)
Television Specialist (Promo)

The following examinations allow for continuous filing:

Caltrans Electrical Technician (Promo)
Caltrans Electrician I (Promo)
Caltrans Electrician II (Promo)
Caltrans Heavy Equipment Mechanic (Promo)
Deputy Attorney III (Promo)
Deputy Attorney IV (Promo)
Transportation Surveyor, Caltrans (Promo)
Transportation Surveyor –Party Chief, Caltrans (Promo)

The following examinations allow for continuous filing on the Internet:

Senior Environmental Planner (Promo)
Senior Right of Way Agent (Promo)
Senior Transportation Engineer, Caltrans (Promo)

Visit our website at www.dot.ca.gov/hq/jobs for open, promotional, CEA and MSDP examinations.

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